

## Wonderful! 288: 3:10 to Puma

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[theme music, "Money Won't Pay" by bo en and Augustus plays]

**Rachel:** Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

**Griffin:** Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

**Rachel:** And this is *Wonderful!*

**Griffin:** This is *Wonderful!* I wasn't trying to say like I was being mean—

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Yeah, I mean a little bit.

**Griffin:** [mockingly] "This is *Wonderful!*"

**Rachel:** Mmm.

**Griffin:** [mockingly] "Ooo-oo-oh, I'm Raaachel." [laughs] [mockingly] "I'm so cool."

This is *Wonderful!* A show where we talk about things we like, that are good, that we're into. And it's— thank you so much for joining us. I'm racking my brain to think of somethin' special to say. Is it okay to just be like this episodes... normal.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** You don't ever hear that on like TV, and bedi— and bedia, when the hosts of shows are like "This is a normal one."

**Rachel:** "We got a normal show for you tonight, guys."

**Griffin:** "It's gonna be... a show that we are used to making, and you're used to hearing." Some people like that, right?

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** Like when I watch *Top Chef* and they're like "Today's episode's gonna be crazy," I'm— sometimes I'm like "I just wanted a normal one." You know?

**Rachel:** Yeah. Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Like in *Restaurant Wars* where it's like "This is gonna be the most fucked episode of *Top Chef* of the whole season," and I'm like "I just wanted a normal— Can't they just cook?."

**Rachel:** [chuckles] "I liked the cooking."

**Griffin:** And while I'm on my soapbox here, sometimes on *Top Chef* they're like "Today, you're gonna cook outside. There's bees everywhere, and you can't use any cutlery at all. And it has to be a dish we can eat using just our faces—"

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** "And no hands."

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** "And also it's snowing, and there's hungry foxes all around."

**Rachel:** "And all your ingredients are canned goods."

**Griffin:** "And all your ingredients are canned goods, and you don't get a can opener." And then they eat the food, and Tom Colicchio is like "This kinda tastes bad." Yeah, Tom! Yeah, Tom!

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Why do you think that is, Thomas?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** "This isn't the up to level of quality I expect it to be." Yeah, man. You put a bunch of funny restrictions on 'em.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Don't you think that is part of the problem? Anyway, we're watchin' *Top Chef* right now.

**Rachel:** Yeah, we are.

**Griffin:** I guess that's my small wonder. We're watchin' *Top Chef All Stars*.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Good season.

**Rachel:** It is good.

**Griffin:** Lotta good chefs.

**Rachel:** It's like world all-stars or something.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** It's like *Top Chef* apparently airs all over the globe.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And so they took winners from seasons all over. And it's people from different countries.

**Griffin:** That show has really changed. We were remarking on that when we were watching this most recent episode. It very— Very posi. Very— Like all the folks are genuinely very sweet to each other.

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** And very kind and supportive, and Jesus that used to not be the case.

**Rachel:** Yeah, no there used to be like real conflict. There was like a lot of ego and a lot of people that didn't get along, and they like didn't wanna work together, and you don't see that as much.

**Griffin:** I don't remember his name, but I remember that was a bald Frenchman who was on the show.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Who was just kind of a jerk.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** A lot of the time.

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah yeah.

**Griffin:** And that— I— You just don't see— You just don't see that very much, huh?

**Rachel:** Yeah, I don't know if that's like careful casting on their part, or people underst—

**Griffin:** Chef culture has shifted a bit.

**Rachel:** Or people understanding like "I better be on my best behavior."

**Griffin:** Yeah. Right, yeah. Anyway... That was my small wonder.

**Rachel:** That was your small wonder.

**Griffin:** I really did— Yeah, I snuck it in there. Is that okay?

**Rachel:** Yeah, no that's fine.

**Griffin:** What do you have to talk about?

**Rachel:** Can I mention your gym participation?

**Griffin:** Sure. Sure.

**Rachel:** I have been going to the gym since April. I joined one close to our house. And I've been talking about it, I wouldn't say incessantly.

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** I've been talking about it a reasonable amount.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** For somebody that goes to the gym a reasonable amount.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And... Griffin joined me last week, and we have been twice now, and it's delightful.

**Griffin:** It's cool! Yeah.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It's very— it's very doable.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** We shouldn't say what gym we go to, 'cause I'm not trying to get poached out there. And—

**Rachel:** [laughs] Poached?!

**Griffin:** Yeah. You know, like I— Someone'd turn me into a rug or a suit or something like that.

**Rachel:** Oh, I thought you meant like another gym would be like "Griffin, have we got a deal for you." [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah no, I don't think that's— I don't think they're gonna be— This isn't *Moneyball*.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I'm not like some— a commodity to be traded around.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** But no, it's good. I— I have been very... Our chil— It's been kind of worrying that our children have increased in energy. Level, and ability. As I have decreased in those same statistics.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah. Yeah.

**Griffin:** Before my time, I would say.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** So this has been— It's been nice to kinda remind myself that I— you know, I can move it.

**Rachel:** Yeah! No, it's— it's... it's impressive. I think you're gonna get some quick gains.

**Griffin:** Oh for sure, I think I'm already I think feelin' it. I mean, I'm for sure feelin' it.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** This— The soreness is truly next level.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** But that's weakness leaving the body, I understand.

**Rachel:** Do you know who said that or where that came from?

**Griffin:** My doctor.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] I feel like you always say that to me, as if it is a known quote, and I don't know...

**Griffin:** I saw it on the wall of my... [clicks tongue in thought] My high school gym had like a weight room, for like the football players to get stronger?

**Rachel:** Yeah?

**Griffin:** And I like saw that painted on there. I don't know why the fuck I was in there. I didn't belong in th— I wasn't using it.

**Rachel:** And—

**Griffin:** But I saw that and I was like "Wow, that's cool."

**Rachel:** At my school you could take weight training as a class?

**Griffin:** Yeah. That was— Yeah.

**Rachel:** And get like a credit for it?

**Griffin:** So wild. So bonkers.

**Rachel:** That's wild to me they had like an inspirational saying, and that that was the one they chose. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I mean, it's bonkers to me that you could take weight training as a class, but also I took piano as a class, you know?

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** It's the same. If you think about—

**Rachel:** And I mean you lift heavy stuff more than you play piano.

**Griffin:** That's fair, yeah. Especially as our boys get heavier. Again, the boys are getting so big and strong.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Help. I go first this week.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** I do a song this time.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** It's a good one. I'm excited to talk about this song.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** It's a song that has become very prevalent in our household.

**Rachel:** Oh no— wait.

**Griffin:** Moreso—

**Rachel:** This could be a number of songs.

**Griffin:** Moreso than any Danny Go, any Coco Melon. Any Blippy or Kids Bop or other children-focused music. It is our two-year-old's favorite song.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Which he requests by name frequently, several times a day at least. That song is, of course, "Turn Down for What" by DJ Snake and Lil Jon.

**Rachel:** I thought for a moment you were gonna do "Skibidi Bop, Yes Yes." [laughs]

**Griffin:** No, yeah there's some— Okay, yes. God, it's so hard to explain... the internet sometimes. But there's like a thing called Skibidi Toilet, which is like a meme from a YouTube video or some shit.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And then they made Roblox games out of it, and then every YouTuber on Earth that Henry watches is all about Skibidi Toilet. And then there's a song called "Skibidi Bop, Yes Yes." I can't— This rabbit hole actually makes me tired to go down it to say it.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.



**Griffin:** I can't imagine what it's like to hear about it.

**Rachel:** This is like a reply all episode right now.

**Griffin:** Yeah, this is not what I want.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I wanna talk about "Turn Down for What" DJ Snake and Lil Jon.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** I ju— I'm not sure I appreciated this song enough in its time, and I'm glad that our song has allowed us this chance to kind of reevaluate it. 'Cause man, it's— It's just a stone-cold banger. Every single time.

**Rachel:** I feel like this was... He was on the path. 'Cause last time we talked about this, we talked about the drop, and how he gets very excited about the drop.

**Griffin:** Oh right, yeah. We played that clip.

**Rachel:** Yeah. And so now we have moved to the next phase, which is he has identified specific songs.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** That have drops, that... are just impossible not to love.

[“Turn Down for What” fades in slowly]

**Griffin:** This— I'm gonna play "Turn Down for What." You've heard it a million times, but here— you're about to hear it a million and one.

[clip of the song's chorus beat drop plays, then fades out]

**Griffin:** It is just— This song is just kinda three drops.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** When you think about it as like a— You could— I love sort imagining the line graph of this song.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Griffin:** The sort of sin wave pattern of “Turn Down for What.”

**Rachel:** A lot of times I’ll lose track and I’ll be like “Is there one left, or was that the last one?”

**Griffin:** Yeah, I— The third one always sneaks up on me.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** This is a song that feels like it’s been around since the dawn of time. It’s hard to imagine a time in my life before “Turn Down for What,” despite the fact that it came out in December 2013. Which is 10 years ago, so I guess it has been out for a grip, huh. It has been out for a minute?

**Rachel:** That came out like when we got married.

**Griffin:** That song came out the year we got married, isn’t that weird?

**Rachel:** Yeah, like the month we got married.

**Griffin:** It’s easy to kind of lump it in with the rest of Lil Jon’s body of work, right?

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Because... thi— “Turn Down for What” came out in 2013. “Get Low” dropped in 2003, which is 20 years ago.

**Rachel:** Whoaaa.

**Griffin:** That feels right, ‘cause I remember that had many— I remember that song really had a seismic shift impact on my high school dances.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** When "Get Low" came out. Even though I remember being, let me think, 16 and hearing "Til sweat drips off my balls," and thinking like I'm... not ready for this.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** None of the people here that are listening to this are ready for this.

**Rachel:** "Excuse me, I'm going to need to leave." [chuckles]

**Griffin:** "I should leave. Can someone call my parents?"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** DJ Snake is a French DJ and producer who had been buddies with Lil Jon for several years before this collab. By the way, fun mini game. Maybe not, maybe you'll crush it. How old do you think Lil Jon is?

**Rachel:** Hooo... [sighs] Uhhh... 51.

**Griffin:** 52, wow!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I'm impressed!

**Rachel:** Yeah usually I'm not as good at that as I was just then, so—

**Griffin:** I think that if I hadn't told you that "Get Low" came out 20 years ago, you would have undershot a bit more.

**Rachel:** Now I'm at an age where I take my own age.

**Griffin:** Oh I see, I got you.

**Rachel:** And I guess based on how old I am,

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** This person would be, and so that's how I got there.

**Griffin:** So DJ Snake put together the beat for "Turn Down for What" before it was tur— before it had words. When it was just this amorphous, beautiful thing that existed in the artistic ether of his mind. And he sent it to Lil Jon to try and get a collaboration going. This is a quote from DJ Snake that is very good. "When I hit up the Big Homie Jon..."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Which like he's not Lil? Which one is he?

**Rachel:** I thi—

**Griffin:** Describe— Which adjective?

**Rachel:** He probably— His friends probably he prefers—

**Griffin:** To his friends, he is the big homie Jon.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** "When I hit up the Big Homie Jon and asked him if he wanted to be on the track this song is a pretty balling song, he heard the beat and was instantly down with the vision. What he sent me back though absolutely blew my mind. I knew Jon was one of the best, but he absolutely killed it on this joint."

I am so glad, again to kind of revisit Lil Jon, because there's like, what? There's like eleven words in this song? Like...

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** "Fire up that loud, another round of shots. Turn down for what." 12 words. 12 words over and over again. So you hear that and you're like "Wow, Lil Jon really... made bank on thi— really got the money and ran on this one."

**Rachel:** [sighs]

**Griffin:** But there is no-one else. There's no-one else who could bring to this song what Lil Jon brought to it period.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** There's not another performing artist alive who could do what he did on this song.

**Rachel:** And can I tell you that until you just said those lyrics to me, I only— I only knew the "turn down for what" part. I didn't— I heard the word "shots" in there.

**Griffin:** I— Yeah.

**Rachel:** But I couldn't distinguish anything else.

**Griffin:** For a while, I thought it was like "five to nine and everybody shots." So it was like...

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** So it's almost like nine to five, but no. It's "fire up that loud, another round of shots." That is what Lil Jon sent him back. Lil Jon was like "Thank you for that beat. Here's what I have. Fire up that loud, another round of shots. Turn down for what."

**Rachel:** It's good.

**Griffin:** And he just sent that, him yelling that in his incredible way about 200 times.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Which is just precisely what the doctor ordered. And this— the— That's— The lyrics are very good. The beat, the actual instrumentation of this song is also exceptional, because I feel like it's so deeply engrained in my mind, like I can imagine every sort of movement.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** Of trap drums and like synth warbles. That— That happen in sequence. And I feel like they— Despite that, they do hit so right, every single time.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** From the build up to the sort of climax— climaxes? Which is the plural of “climax.”

**Rachel:** [laughs] Of course.

**Griffin:** The message of the song is also so great, I think. ‘Cause it’s ju— It’s a party jam right?

**Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah yeah.

**Griffin:** And so there’s a lot of ways to frame that and certainly Lil Jon has done a lot of that framing in so many ways. “Shots shots shots shots shots shots, everybody,” like more straightforward, let’s party. What this song says is what possible reason could we have to stop partying?

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Yeah.

**Griffin:** And it doesn’t provide any answer to that rhetorical question. It might be solvable! Like turn down for what? What— There could be like I’m sick. I’m sick today, Lil Jon. And then he would be like that’s okay. “You’re okay. Griffin is excus—” That’s his next track, is “Griffin is Excused.”

**Rachel:** [giggles] “I have terrible news. Big Homie Jon, I have terrible news.”

**Griffin:** Terrible news.

**Rachel:** “Your car is being towed.”

**Griffin:** Oh, okay. I will be back in a moment. Turn down for a se— for a bit.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Until I go and rectify this. I have to go and pick up my kids from soccer practice. Turn it down until, let me see. Reconvene here at 7:30, and then turn it back up.

**Rachel:** Yeah, at which point the what will be over, and we do not have to turn it down.

**Griffin:** So the song is excellent, Gus wants it constantly. When he shouts "turn down for what" he only gets like every other word and it's very fun.

**Rachel:** It's funny 'cause it's— It's really the excitement and the momentum. Because he will specifically ask for "Turn Down for What," he will say all of the words, in that order. But then when the song is playing, [chuckles] and it gets to the point where he can shout that, you can tell he kinda panics. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** He panics every single time, it's very good. Song is great, the music video is the stuff of legends.

**Rachel:** I don't know that I've seen it.

[pause]

**Griffin:** Okay. I'm gonna just put it on the computer in the background.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** While I continue to talk about it, 'cause it's important. You're just gonna have to imagine the... the song playing.

[song plays quietly in the background]

**Griffin:** So that's Daniel Kwan.

**Rachel:** [surprised] Oh!

**Griffin:** From the Daniels, the Academy Award Winning Directors of *Everything, Everywhere, All at Once*.

**Rachel:** Yeees!

**Griffin:** That's Sunita Mani who has been in a bunch of stuff. She's been in *Mr. Robot* and *GLOW* and *Spirited*, she was the ghost of Christmas Past. She's been in a bunch of stuff. So in this video, Daniel Kwan plays a

man who starts out on the top of his apartment building, and as the song goes, he humps his way through the— [chuckles] through the ground.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And smashes through every floor, using his sort of pelvis as a kind of like, I don't know, like a sonic cannon? And he just— just humps his way through the apartment and makes a big party happen. And soon everybody else starts humping through the ground, and smashing through the ground, and it's very powerful and poetic, and cartoonishly kind of weirdly horny. It's gonna be hard to kinda continue talking while this happens in the background.

**Rachel:** Yeah. I think I've seen enough.

[music fades out]

**Griffin:** So I think it's very good that the Academy Award Winning Directors of *Everything, Everywhere, All at Once* created and starred in this music video for "Turn Down for What." There's a quote from Daniel Kwan who said "For a while, Daniel and I had been wanting to explore male sexuality in a really weird way. For some reason, our brains came up with this image and another universe where dudes are so pumped up on their own dicks."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** "And they're so into their testosterone that the way that they show that is by breaking shit with their dicks. So whatever happens, that would just be a funny logical progression."

**Rachel:** You're really like planting the seed for the film that they would go on to make, you know?

**Griffin:** Yes, of course. Absolutely.

**Rachel:** Like this alternate reality where things are ridiculous.

**Griffin:** Yeah, there's a big hot dog finger energy.

**Rachel:** Exactly. [chuckles]



**Griffin:** To the music video. Anyway, that's "Turn Down for What." Great song that has really made me appreciate the singular legacy of Lil Jon, and DJ Snake. I saw a great story from the 2016 election I think, or maybe 2020, when someone asked Lil Jon to endorse Trump for president, 'cause I guess he was on *Celebrity Apprentice*.

**Rachel:** Ohh, yeah.

**Griffin:** And [chuckles] his response was just a tweet that said [loudly] "How 'bout fuck noooo!"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It was great. Anyway. Can I steal you away?

**Rachel:** Yes.

[*Home Improvement* stinger plays]

[ad break]

**Rachel:** I have my topic for you. Are you ready?

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** My topic this week is the zoo train.

**Griffin:** The zoo train?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Yes, I—

**Griffin:** I guess this is a thing, huh?

**Rachel:** This is a thing. Yeah, it was difficult to find like one resource. [chuckles] I really— Like I literally Googled "list of zoo trains." [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Well—

**Rachel:** Doesn't exist.

**Griffin:** Can I say something? This happens on this show sometimes where we become the source. We are the ones who are like "Wait a minute, something's happening here. There's trains in a lot of zoos." Now all of a sudden we are the NexisLexis result when you search for zoo trains.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's like "Well *Wonderful!* did a pretty deep dive on this."

**Rachel:** Talked about four zoo trains, so there's gotta be at least four.  
[chuckles]

**Griffin:** Okay it's probably the same four that I'm thinking of, so let's see.

**Rachel:** No, there's a lot of zoo trains.

**Griffin:** Okay, thank God.

**Rachel:** When I was searching for this, it was just... It seemed like the majority of zoos have a train.

**Griffin:** I love that. That doesn't make any fuckin' sense at all. I love that so much.

**Rachel:** I think— I couldn't really figure out— Like you can Google any number of things. Like you can find out what the first zoo is, or like you know the oldest zoo in this country. But if you Google like "first zoo train."

**Griffin:** [giggles]

**Rachel:** [chuckles] You will not find anything. So I just thought I would do kind of a smattering of zoo trains.

**Griffin:** Yeah!

**Rachel:** My experience, of course, began in St Louis. The St Louis Zoo Line Railroad, as I knew it. Now it is— it is sponsored by Emerson, so it is the Emerson Zooline Railroad. But it is a mile and a half around the zoo, and there is like a 20 minute little informational like speech that happens while you are on it. Like a person will sit in the back and will tell you about the zoo and the areas you are going through. And the train can hold like 80 people, and it is a great way to get around.

**Griffin:** It is an important way to get around.

**Rachel:** The—

**Griffin:** That's a biiiiig zoo to traverse by foot.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah, so the St Louis Zoo is 90 acres, which doesn't even rank it as like one of the five biggest. When I was looking like the Bronx Zoo was up there, our zoo, of course, at the Smithsonian. I don't know how exactly they are... counting acreage? And what makes a big zoo? Like is it just the land it takes up, or the number of exhibits? I don't know.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I don't know.

**Rachel:** It was difficult for me to determine. But yeah, the St Louis Zoo Train, we took Henry on it once.

**Griffin:** Great.

**Rachel:** And it's like— it's like a bonus thing? Like you go to the zoo to see animals, and then there's also a train to ride?

**Griffin:** It's a hat on a hat, and it looks— but that— both hats look really good.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] And it's a great way to get around. I think like the nature of zoo is that you have a lot of... like... open, untreelined, often concrete area. And in the summer it is miserable.

**Griffin:** So bad.

**Rachel:** Get on that train. Now all of a sudden, you're on the other side of the zoo, and you're a little relaxed.

**Griffin:** Our small son went to the zoo today, and big son had the opportunity to go to zoo and was like “Nope.” And I was like I kinda get it.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Griffin:** It’s pretty hot out there.

**Rachel:** It is pretty hot. So I wanted to talk about some zoos, some notable zoos. San Francisco’s zoo train, I just wanted to bring it up because they call their train the Little Puffer.

**Griffin:** Oh, that’s cool.

**Rachel:** Which I just love so much. It was actually— It was— The train itself was purchased in 1925 and installed in the zoo in 1941.

**Griffin:** Still going? Still same train?

**Rachel:** Yeah, it’s— well it went in storage from like 1965 to 1997.

**Griffin:** Whoa, that’s a long gap.

**Rachel:** And then was restored. I mean here’s the thing, and this is why a lot of zoos would not have a train, or not continue to have a train, it is expensive to keep up a train.

**Griffin:** Sure. All that coal.

**Rachel:** And zoos, which are focused on [chuckles] animals, not coal. A lot of them are steam.

**Griffin:** Okay. Some of them are coal though, probably. [snorts]

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Just like a little ki— like a little soot-stained kid in the front.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Each train has like one coal.

**Griffin:** Uh-huh.

**Rachel:** Each time, just to get it to go around.

**Griffin:** It's just a mon— a monkey. With a shovel.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [in a high-pitched voice] "It's a livin'!"

**Rachel:** Um—

**Griffin:** Got a little tin lunchbox with a banana in it.

**Rachel:** I wanted to talk about—

**Griffin:** Play with me!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Play with me!

**Rachel:** I feel like I did for a little while!

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Rachel:** With my little one coal!

**Griffin:** [disappointed] Okay, fine.

**Rachel:** Gets the whole train goin'.

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Rachel:** I— There has also been a move to electric trains, which I think is interesting. St Louis just got one in March 2023. Cincinnati has one now. The focus is to save on fuel and maintenance costs, and Cincinnati gained status as the greenest zoo in America.

**Griffin:** Wow!

**Rachel:** Which is part of the reason that they took on the electric train. The one I wanted to spend a little time on is the San Antonio Zoo. Now we have never been there.

**Griffin:** No. I've heard good things though.

**Rachel:** Yes. Yeah, we— [chuckles] It's kind of embarrassing how little we went to San Antonio, considering we were like an hour away.

**Griffin:** We went a couple times. It's— you know, it's cool. I've genuinely liked San Antonio every time we went, it's—

**Rachel:** I don't think we ever took our children there, did we?

**Griffin:** Maybe not.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Maybe not, no.

**Rachel:** I don't think so. So the San Antonio Zoo has a train. The railroad there was built in 1956, and at the time was the longest miniature railroad in the world. It was formerly known as the Brackenridge Eagle.

**Griffin:** Cool. God, trains have the coolest names.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Because it goes around Brackenridge Park. The thing I wanted to talk about is in 1970, when this miniature train was robbed at gunpoint. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** What?!

**Rachel:** In 1970, in July. So you know, we just passed the anniversary. They have what San Antonio calls "The Great Little Train Robbery."

**Griffin:** Wait, why would— Why?!

**Rachel:** They celebrate it every— I'm gonna get there. They celebrate it every year. Which I think is funny 'cause it was an actual crime. Like these people actually went to prison. But it is like so unusual that they celebrate it as an event every year. And so at this point it was over 50

years ago, and what happened— So there is a like a— It's actually a witness testimonial, so the people who were kids at the time were— told a newspaper this story of the experience. The person they interviewed, their father...? Was the manager at the like train depot.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** So they were on the train, like his kids, like the family was on the train. And the train stopped, and then they heard people talking about how the train was being held up, on the train. The robbers, two people wearing masks, one had a gun and the other had a duffel bag. And some people started hopping off the train immediately. Were just like "Forget this! I'm outta here." [giggles]

**Griffin:** Yeah, no kidding!

**Rachel:** At which point the robbers were like "Get back on the train!," [laughs] 'cause they clearly didn't have a plan.

**Griffin:** No. Well, they— Except that they did, because they robbed a tra— Like.

**Rachel:** But anybody that's been on a miniature train knows that it's like— You know, there isn't an elaborate—

**Griffin:** You aren't contained.

**Rachel:** Sometimes there's like a little chain that hooks onto the side, but there's not a lot of barrier. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** What a strange choice.

**Rachel:** And then people were just kind of skirting the issue. Like they saw it happening and so they put stuff in their socks, they took their money out of their wallet, and so by the time the robbers got to them, they like didn't have anything available to the robbers. Because the robbers were trying to move quickly, just going from like person to person.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** So if you saw them [chuckles] coming down the way, you were like "Oh, I better hide all my stuff," but by the time they got there, there wasn't— there wasn't anything to get. So what happened was one— The person who is being interviewed, her dad, as I mentioned, owned the train— or managed the train depot. And one of the guys on the train like got on a walkie talkie radio thing and reached out to her dad and said "There are people robbing the train," and he's like "Are you kidding me?!"

**Griffin:** [wheezes]

**Rachel:** "Are they armed?" and they said "Yes." So she said her dad clicked off the radio, opened up a safe, and pulled [chuckles] a gun out. Which— I— They don't explain why somebody managing a zoo train would have a gun. In a safe? [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Have a gun? Yeah, that's another great question. But apparently they knew. They had their suspicions. They knew like "This would be the perfect crime, I should get strapped. If I were a criminal, I would rob our small train for sure, for sure."

**Rachel:** At which point, this woman's [chuckles] dad told the person he was working with to lock everything down, they're probably going to try to double back and rob the main office here too. By the time he got there, the robbers were already gone, but they did get caught. Apparently they were soldiers that were stationed nearby at Fort Sam Houston.

**Griffin:** Guys.

**Rachel:** They got away with about \$500 in valuables and cash. But they got caught, and train robbery is a federal crime, so they were given 10 and 20 years in the federal penitentiary. Because of their train robbery.

**Griffin:** That's... That's the wildest... That's the wildest crime— It's not the wildest crime, right? There's obviously lots of wild crime stories out there. And speaking from experience, there's very little that is funny about being robbed at gunpoint.

**Rachel:** Yes.



**Griffin:** But... The leaps that someone has to go through to plan this heist... and not go "Should we maybe do like a building inste— Should we maybe not do— "

**Rachel:** [chuckles] I know!

**Griffin:** "It might be better— Hey, Rob? I was thinking about this."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** "Maybe we should, you know, do like a room. With walls?"

**Rachel:** Yeah yeah yeah.

**Griffin:** "And a door? And not a big, long room, with no walls. And is in a zoo, in the middle of a zoo."

Do you think they just wanted to do a train robbery really bad?

**Rachel:** I— It's very possible, and it— I mean here's the thing, it is celebrated now, so apparently this crime marked itself in regional and state history as the first time in 47 years that a train had been robbed. [chuckles] And the last known train robbery in the state. So they really— They are lumped in now with all these famous train robbers in history.

**Griffin:** But probably not in the way—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** — they were hoping they would be.

**Rachel:** So apparently they have— It is not unusual for them to celebrate this at the San Antonio Zoo. Recently, zoo employees dressed as bandits once again walked the length of a train holding out a bag, this time asking for donations towards a new train. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** That's great.

**Rachel:** I want it— So, part of the reason I thought of this is because I have talked a lot about how I really want the Smithsonian National Zoo to have a train.

**Griffin:** Please.

**Rachel:** It's too big.

**Griffin:** It's not just big, folks, it's— it is angular. It is a... downhill jaunt, which then...

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Becomes a very rough uphill jaunt.

**Rachel:** Yes, there are like two entrances, one at the top of the hill, one at the bottom of the hill, and it seems like... If you're gonna do the whole zoo, you're gonna end up in trouble at some point.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Either having to spend the whole time going uphill, or at the very end having to go uphill to get back to your car.

**Griffin:** Pro-tip from me, my strat now; park at the bottom, go up at the very beginning, and then you can just enjoy the zoo.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh. So I was looking, like I was Googling like "Smithsonian Zoo train?," and what I found was in— And this is an article from 2008, the Smithsonian had a renovation plan that was approved to cost about \$1 billion. It was a 20-year plan, so we're not at the end of it yet. It called for a parking garage, which we have not seen yet [chuckles] either. Seven new animal exhibits, new plazas and visitors' amenities, and then one of the things in there was an aerial tram.

**Griffin:** I was thinking like a funicular of some sort, or a— something like that. That would be dope.

**Rachel:** Part of what was approved was a three-station aerial tram, similar to a ski lift, that would run the length of the zoo's 163 acres.

**Griffin:** Oh, I like that. I like that.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Again, this was published in 2008, it's a 20-year plan.

**Griffin:** We're getting' close.

**Rachel:** We're gettin' close [chuckles] and I have not even seen signs that this is going to be constructed.

**Griffin:** Please look forward— Pardon our mess as we—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** — make this zoo more traversable.

**Rachel:** So I don't know if that's still coming or not.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** But fingers crossed.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Well, thank you for your service. I'm gonna be thinking about this small train robbery for a very long time.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** And... I was trying to think of like a pun— like a train robbery pun. Of like— but the best I came up with is "3:10 to Puma."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** But I don't think that that's any— "3:10 to Zoo-ma"? They might not have—

**Rachel:** [laughs quietly]

**Griffin:** — pumas at the San Antonio Zoo is the only issue.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** And I don't even know if *3:10 to Yuma* has a train robbery in it.

**Rachel:** The problem is we don't know a lot of train words.

**Griffin:** That's not true.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Engine.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Rail.

**Rachel:** Locomotive is another word.

**Griffin:** Locomotive, yeah.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Anyway, that's—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** There's no— Hey, there's nothing there. I've just— We're standing on the precipice of a comedy void and looking over it saying like "There might be— we might be the ones to forge this impossible pun."

**Rachel:** This is why there's not a lot of train resources on the internet is everybody's sitting—

**Griffin:** They're just not very funny.

**Rachel:** — trying to figure out what to name this website.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And they've got nothin', and so.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Hey thanks to bo en and Augustus for the use of our theme song "Money Won't Pay." You can find a link to that in the episode description. And thank you to MaximumFun for having us on the network.

Got to [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), check out all the great shows that they have on there. Go to [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com) and check out all the hot merch that we've got goin' on. We got a new Clint the Planeswalking Janitor sticker that is just fantastic. Got some *Besties* merch comin' soon that I'm pretty stoked about too. I'll show you some roughs for it.

**Rachel:** Okay!

**Griffin:** I think that's just about it. Oh, we got some shows comin' up. We're gonna be in Seattle doin' *MBMBaM* and *TAZ* during PAX. We're gonna be in Philly, and then New York. We're going to New York ComiCon in October, so you should come and see one of those shows. Go to [mcelroyfamily.com](http://mcelroyfamily.com) or [mcelroy.family](http://mcelroy.family), and you can find links to all that stuff. But til then, thanks for— thank you for listening to this very standard, boilerplate...

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** By the numbers. [chuckles]

[theme music fades in]

**Rachel:** It's an episode!

**Griffin:** It's a episode of *Wonderful!*

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** This is how it always ends!

[theme music plays, then fades out]

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